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SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE BRIEFING  
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CUBAN SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

- I. Tangible Cuban support for revolutionary activity in Latin America over the past two years has been at a lower level than during the peak period from 1961 to 1963, but this does not reflect any weakening of Fidel Castro's determination to spread his revolution.
  - A. Castro agreed, at an extraordinary meeting of Latin American Communist parties held in Havana in November, 1964, that he would stop supporting would-be insurgent groups not under the control of the orthodox pro-Moscow Communists.
    1. He has continued, however, to give moral, material, and financial support and training to such groups in Venezuela, Colombia, and Guatemala, his three priority targets at present, and he made it clear in a speech last month that he does not feel bound by the 1964 agreement.

- B. On March 13th, he repeated his persistent thesis that violent revolution is necessary to bring about any meaningful political and social change in Latin America.
1. He accused the orthodox Communist parties which do not support dissident insurgent groups--in Venezuela and Colombia, for example--of cowardice and betrayal.
  2. Castro appeared particularly irked that a Soviet delegation has been attempting to improve relations and expand trade in some of the countries--Colombia in particular--where he hopes to develop revolutions. In specific reference to the Soviet Union, he complained that members of the Communist camp who deal with oligarchies in countries where insurgents are active are betraying the revolutionaries.
- C. Castro's statements continue to reflect his intense disillusionment with the urban-based pro-Moscow Communist parties and to portend even greater emphasis on the predominance of the rural guerrilla movements. These frequently operate independently of the regular parties.

1. In his March 13th speech, Castro stated:  
"If, in any nation, those who call themselves Communists do not know how to fulfill their duty, we will support those who--even though they do not call themselves Communists--behave like real Communists in the struggle."
2. This was a crystal-clear renunciation of the November 1964 agreement. Castro was saying that wherever the orthodox Communist parties will not seek the violent road of revolution to seize power, he will ignore the party leaders and work with militant extremists who are ready to fight.

II. In those Latin American countries where there is no significant insurgency under way, the Cubans have been concentrating for the past two years on developing a support mechanism while they wait for a suitable opportunity and adequate assets.

- A. The Cubans continue to provide some ideological and guerrilla warfare training to militants from several Latin American countries. Accurate figures are not available, but at least 2,500 Latin Americans have received such training in Cuba since 1961.

1. This is by no means a maximum figure for the guerrilla potential. Many of these trainees in turn trained others when they returned to their home countries. Others, however, probably became disillusioned with the difficulties of initiating armed revolution, and left the field to more willing martyrs.
2. In the last year or so, moreover, we have received fewer and fewer reports of Cuban efforts to fund Latin American revolutionary groups, and fewer Latin Americans appear to be traveling to Cuba for training.
3. On the other hand, Havana has demonstrated 25X1C  
an improved capability to [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] This ability has not yet been translated into a noticeably more successful subversive effort, partly because the Latin American governments have become increasingly vigilant and aware of the danger.

- B. The Cubans have been able to bring about international cooperation of national movements and parties in some areas. This has helped to create

or strengthen infrastructures upon which future revolutionary activities can be built, by making it easier to channel funds, transport agents and leaders, transmit communications, and obtain false documents.

1. Two groups providing such support to the Venezuelan movements were uncovered in Colombia in 1966, and one of the Colombian movements has chosen the Venezuelan border region as its area of guerrilla operations. Thus it can support Venezuelans moving either way across the border and also is in position to cross to Venezuela.
2. The Salvadoran Party has provided Salvadoran documentation to Guatemalans for travel to Bloc countries, and has also provided sanctuary for Guatemalans and Hondurans.

III. Castro's fervent appeals to Latin American extremists to carry out armed struggles in their countries betray a certain amount of frustration over his program's lack of success, and the lack of enthusiasm it engenders among the pro-Moscow Communists in Latin America.

- A. Several important Communist Party leaders were quick to criticize Castro's revolutionary strategy after his pointed attack on the Moscow-oriented parties in his speech on July 26th, 1966. At that time, he called them "pseudo-revolutionaries," who lacked the courage to follow the path of armed struggle.
- B. Despite the fiery declarations of the January 1966 Tri-Continent Conference in Havana, and the subsequent general call for insurgency in Latin America, no measurable continent-wide response has been noted. In fact, insurgent movements have lost rather than gained ground during the last year or two, although pro-Castro insurgents in Colombia and Bolivia have very recently shown signs of new life.
  - 1. An outgrowth of the Tri-Continent Conference--the Latin American Solidarity Organization--is to hold its first meeting in Havana in late July. The efficacy of the strategy of violent revolution in Latin America will certainly be one of the main themes.
  - 2. It will also give the Cubans an excellent chance to offer more training, propaganda

guidelines, and possibly funds to the leaders of various groups of the extreme left who will be attending the conference.

- C. For the past year, inflammatory propaganda has constituted Cuba's most consistent support for insurgency in the hemisphere. The emphasis has shifted somewhat from the strident calls for immediate armed action in the early days of the Castro regime.
1. The current emphasis is more on laying a solid foundation for future revolutionary action, attempting to unite feuding factions of the extreme left, and extolling those revolutionaries who are willing to take up the fight, regardless of whether they are bonafide Communists.
  2. Havana now is broadcasting about 175 hours a week to Latin America, primarily in Spanish and Portuguese. There is also, however, propaganda in French, Creole for Haiti, Guarani for Paraguay, and Quechua for Bolivia. The Quechua schedule for Bolivia was increased from 1 1/2 hours per week to seven on March 31st.

D. The extent of guerrilla activity in Latin American countries is directly related, of course, to how dissatisfied the people of a given country may be over social injustices and the lack of economic opportunity, and what chance there appears to be for reform.

1. Cuban propaganda takes the line that the ruling oligarchies have defeated and will continue to defeat all attempts to change existing conditions by legal, parliamentary methods.
2. Therefore, Havana Radio argues, the so-called "via pacifica" or peaceful path of reform sought by many of the orthodox Communist parties is ineffective, and the only course is armed struggle.

IV. I propose at this point to examine Cuban goals and activities in the individual Latin American target countries, beginning with Central America. Here, of course, Panama--because of the U. S. presence and the importance to us of the Canal--must be high on the list of Castro's long-range targets, but when he examines his assets in proportion to the possibilities for success, the priority goes to Guatemala.



A. Cuba has been giving assistance and guidance to Guatemalan guerrilla and terrorist groups for more than three years. Initially Yon Sosa's leftist-extremist 13th of November organization was the main recipient of this aid.

1. After the November 1964 Conference of Latin American Communists in Havana, however, Cuba channeled its aid exclusively to the fighting arm of the Guatemala Communist Party, the Rebel Armed Forces, or FAR.

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2. [REDACTED] at least 15 guerrilla trainees arrived in Guatemala from Cuba in mid-1966, and that 60 men were to go from Guatemala to Cuba for similar training early last August.
3. Recently, there has been a resumption of an old argument between the leaders of the orthodox Guatemalan Communist Party, and the leaders of the Rebel Armed Forces, who are more militant and more responsive to Castro influence. The FAR leaders have been complaining that the regular

Party machinery is not pushing terrorism in urban areas, and has failed to relieve military pressure on the guerrillas. The FAR also complains that the central committee has too many old-guard members who lack militancy, and wants them replaced with Castro-oriented activists.

4. Although both groups have been weakened by dissension and army operations against them, they continue to be effective in harassing the government; the FAR, at least can count on continued Cuban training and financial assistance.
- B. Cuba has been providing occasional guerrilla training for revolutionaries from the other Central American countries, but appears to be unwilling to give them funds or other active support until they initiate armed action.
- C. Mexico remains a special case. Cuban subversive activities in Mexico consist largely of support and liaison actions directed against other countries--the most recent example being the smuggling of arms to Guatemala by a

Cuban diplomat based in Mexico. Castro has avoided revolutionary activity against Mexico itself, in order to preserve it as a commercial, travel, and diplomatic outlet for Cuba, as well as an outpost for subversion in neighboring countries.

V. Despite Cuba's proximity to Central America, it is in South America that Castro has made his most significant headway in influencing subversive groups. Since 1960, dissident groups responsive to Castro influence have been active at various times in Brazil, Ecuador, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia. None of these groups has come close to overthrowing a government, but those in Venezuela and Colombia have been able to harass the incumbent regimes.

VI. Cuba actively supports Communist insurgency in Venezuela, which heads Castro's list of Latin American targets for subversion.

A. The Cuban propaganda effort remained high in 1966, but the extent of assistance in the form of money and training seems to be limited to supplies for the dissident Armed Forces of National Liberation, or FALN, at odds with

the regular Communist Party and led by Douglas Bravo. [REDACTED] men and supplies arrived in Venezuela from Cuba in July 1966.

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- B. Castro's support for the Bravo group brought strong protests from the Moscow-line Communist Party of Venezuela in late 1966, and his recent attack on the party for failing to launch a guerrilla offensive has brought the Caracas party leaders close to a break with the Cuban party.
- C. In the meantime, the increasing frequency of rural guerrilla attacks--the most pronounced since 1963--and the recent murder of the Venezuelan foreign minister's brother have prompted a strong reaction from the Venezuelan government.
- D. Castro remains unmoved by these protestations. In his 13 March speech he praised the guerrillas, implying that he would continue to give them his full support.

VII. Colombia--which Castro highlights along with Venezuela as being in the forefront of those countries "struggling against imperialism"--has recently seen renewed guerrilla activity.

- A. During the past month, five incidents have occurred, including an Army of National Liberation (ELN) attack on a police post in which five policemen were killed; and a Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) ambush of an army patrol in which fifteen soldiers were killed.
- B. Both the ELN and the FARC are strongly supported by Cuban propaganda, but the extent of actual Cuban aid to them is not known. We do know that an ELN leader returned to Colombia from Cuba in September 1966 with \$10,000 in his pocket, and that in late 1964 another ELN leader brought back \$25,000.
- C. Recent reports indicate that, as in Venezuela, the Communist Party of Colombia, or PCC, is increasingly opposed to Castro's support for guerrillas not under PCC control. PCC leaders correctly reason that they are the ones who suffer during government reprisals for guerrilla attacks. The recent large-scale roundup of Communist Party leaders in Bogota bears out their fears.
- D. This development, coming in the wake of deteriorating relations between Cuba and the

Communist Party of Venezuela and Castro's recent attack on Moscow-oriented Communist parties, emphasizes the growing controversy within Latin American Communism as to whether the movement should be directed by guerrillas in the field, or by the regular parties.

VIII. In Peru, Cuba's relationship with leftist-extremist groups has been severely hampered by the government's crackdown following the initiation of guerrilla activity in June, 1965. Today, insurgent leaders are either dead, in jail, or in exile, and their organization is badly disrupted. Some efforts are being made by the remnants to reorganize, but funding and communication channels have not been restored.

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guerrillas are once again about to initiate action in southern Peru, and that they expect Cuban assistance. Internal bickering and successful government counterinsurgency operations, however, would seem to preclude an increase of insurgent activity in Peru to the proportions of the 1965 troubles.

IX. Recent reports have indicated direct Cuban involvement in Bolivian dissident preparations for guerrilla

activity. According to these reports, Bolivians who have been in training in Cuba have returned and are establishing their own training camps in the Alto Beni and the Chapare regions of the country. We believe that as many as 100 Bolivians have received guerrilla warfare training in Cuba since 1961.

- A. Some internal dissension over the proper time for launching the insurgency has developed. At least some of the guerrillas have begun operations. A government force was attacked in eastern Bolivia on 23 March and suffered several casualties.
- X. Some prospective insurgents from the other South American countries continue to receive guerrilla training in Cuba, but have not been able to translate this into active insurgency after returning home.
  - A. There has been no recent activity directed against the governments of Argentina, Paraguay, or Uruguay, and the Chilean Communist Party's firm adherence to "via pacifica" or the peaceful way to power has thwarted Castro's aims there.

B. In regard to Brazil, Castro has been in contact with the exiled Leonel Brizola, the former favored Castro operative who is a brother-in-law of ex-President Goulart.

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It is doubtful, however, that Castro really counts on Brizola or any other Brazilian to begin a determined antigovernment campaign soon in Brazil.

C. Ecuador's long history of instability should afford a fertile ground for a Castro-oriented insurgent movement. The perpetual disorganization, lack of cohesiveness, and poor quality of leadership among all Ecuadorean political groups, however, also characterizes the leadership among the various Ecuadorean revolutionary groups. This has probably led the Cubans to conclude that revolutionary prospects in Ecuador are slight at best.

XI. In summary, Cuba has given ample notice that it intends to continue its propaganda and some training and financial support to selected revolutionary



movements. As long as exploitable situations exist in the hemisphere, Cuba is on record as being willing to contribute toward the establishment of "more Cubas" in Latin America.

- A. It is also apparent, however, that Havana is unwilling to run the great risks involved to provide significant military assistance to antigovernment groups in Latin America.
- B. The effect of the Communist parties' growing opposition to Castro-influenced armed action remains to be seen. Several of these parties may follow the lead of the Venezuelan party in openly denouncing Castro's revolutionary meddling. At the very least, such a development will speed up political fragmentation which--on the leftist-extremist side--could mean less control and discipline from above, and more urban terrorism and rural violence.